

Summary Speech at the Closing Ceremony

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Members and experts, Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

The CCICED 2010 Annual General Meeting has accomplished its agenda and is about to close. All Members and experts have shown their brilliant wisdom and sparks of thoughts with fruitful outcomes during the three-day meeting.

Yesterday morning, Premier Wen Jiabao met with CCICED International Members and listened to their policy recommendations on facilitating economic and social development and strengthening environmental protection in China. Premier Wen Jiabao has pointed out that the Chinese Government attaches great importance to the protection of the eco-environment and will make more efforts through new development ideas, legal development, scientific planning as well as all other relevant fields; and will link monitoring, treatment and control measures with targets and goals. However, we are still confronted with a serious environmental situation, and we are determined to solve the problem. In the “12th Five-Year Plan” period, we will firmly abide by the concepts of green development, low carbon development, sustainable development and harmony between man and nature; will accelerate economic restructuring and transformation of the economic development mode; and will improve environmental quality and ecological civilization with stronger determination and effective measures. Premier Wen Jiabao gave very positive feedback to the activities of CCICED and said he would attend the CCICED 20th anniversary celebration. Li Keqiang, Vice Premier of the State Council and Chairman of CCICED, attended the opening ceremony and gave an important speech. He pointed out that, in order to determine if there was any practical outcome in transforming the economic development mode, a basic criterion was whether the resource and development cost had gone down; and that an important determining factor was how strenuous an effort had been made in protection of the eco-environment. Vice Premier Li Keqiang stressed that we will take the development of a resource-saving and environment-friendly society as an important focal point for accelerating

the shift of the economic development mode; explore a new path to environmental protection that is low in cost, high in benefits, low in emissions and sustainable in development, facilitate green development and improve living environment, and protect the security of ecosystems and improve conservation culture in order to achieve a sound and rapid economic and social development. The latest statements and requirements made by Premier Wen Jiabao and Vice Premier Li Keqiang on environmental protection are their expectations for CCICED as well as for the environmental protection workforce across China.

This Annual General Meeting (AGM) has focused on the theme “Ecosystem Management and Green Development - Exploring New Path for Environmental Protection in China”. CCICED Chinese Executive Vice Chair and International Executive Vice Chair as well as other Vice Chairs all made speeches. Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, gave a special speech. The meeting listened to the reports of five Task Forces including Ecosystem Service and Management Strategy in China, Ecosystem Issues and Policy Options Addressing Sustainable Development of China’s Ocean and Coast, China Ecological Footprint Report 2010, Developing Policies for Soil Environmental Protection in China and Policy Framework Research on Improving Service Functions of Aquatic Ecosystems, as well as the policy recommendations to the Chinese Government. The meeting also organized two separate forums for in-depth discussions, one being “China’s New Path for Environmental Protection - Addressing Ecology and Economy” and the other “the 12th Five-Year Plan’: Energy Conservation, Emission Reduction and Green Development”. The Policy Recommendation drafting Team has incorporated comments and suggestions raised by the participants, revised and improved the policy recommendations, which have been adopted in principle by Members after collective review. After the meeting, the CCICED Secretariat will submit it to the Chinese Government in accordance with relevant procedures.

Last year, the CCICED Bureau proposed that the adoption and implementation of CCICED reports should be reviewed at the following CCICED AGM in the form of a written report. We have adopted this suggestion this year and will follow this practice in the future.

Here, I would like answer one question, which was raised during the discussions at this AGM. When discussing environmental issues concerning seas and land, CCICED has put forward recommendations involving the functions of other departments Will these policy recommendations work? There is nothing to be worried about. CCICED is an advisory body for decision makers of the State Council. Once CCICED’s report is submitted to the State Council, after careful consideration, the leaders of the State Council will forward the report



to relevant departments for further study and implementation.

Members and experts,

In one month, China will enter the first year of the “12th Five-Year Plan” period. At this critical moment, CCICED, with its unique characteristics, has reviewed its achievements in the past and looked into the future. During the AGM, Members and experts have put forward many constructive comments and suggestions, such as how to combine the shift of the economic development mode with the enhancement of environmental protection in the next five years; to continuously explore the new path to environmental protection with Chinese characteristics; and to promote a sound and fast development of economy, society and environmental protection. As a result, the AGM has made a series of important achievements. In summary, a consensus has been developed on the following five aspects.

First, we must actively evaluate progress and achievements of environmental protection in China during the past five years. Members mentioned several times that China has made great progress in environmental protection in the past five years, in particular since the international financial crisis. They think it is not easy for China to meet SO₂ and COD reduction targets ahead of schedule, to facilitate the optimization of economic structure, and to gradually improve environmental quality during the “11th Five-Year Plan”, with a 3% higher GDP growth than expected, a 700 million ton increase in the consumption of coal and 270 million KW more installed capacity than the planned amount. In the past five years, the Chinese Government has established the Ministry of Environmental Protection to strengthen the institutional capacity for environmental protection. It has released the National Plan for Main Function Areas, adopted resource and environment carrying capacity as the key factor for identifying regional development direction, and strived for a green development pattern. In China’s western development plan and development plan and policy for strategic and emerging industries, more focus has been given to environmental protection principles and requirements. The release of these policy measures relate to suggestions and effective work of the Council’s Members and experts, which should be recognized. Just as CCICED policy recommendations point out: “One basic challenge for China’s green development is the contradiction between limited natural resources and ecosystem service capacity and increasing socioeconomic demand”. Therefore, there is still hard work ahead and a long way to go in environmental protection.

Second, a strategic opportunity should be seized and utilized for the development of environmental protection in the next five years. The “12th Five-Year Plan” will be the period of a strategic opportunity for environmental protection in China. The opportunity is reflected by the following three aspects: 1) The Chinese Government clearly states that

environmental protection is the fundamental measure for development of conservation culture. Development of ecological culture, economic development, political development, cultural development and social development constitute the overall arrangements of the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics, mainstreaming environmental protection with economic and social development. 2) At present, China is vigorously carrying out economic restructuring, where environmental protection will be an important focal point. Economic restructuring will generate a huge driving force for environmental protection. 3) China is actively exploring a new path for environmental protection that is low in cost, high in benefits, low in emissions and sustainable in development. Vice Premier Li Keqiang pointed out that this is the new path not only for environmental protection, but also for economic development. Of course, the opportunity is reflected in other aspects, too. How to utilize this strategic opportunity is an important issue for environmental protection departments at all levels. It is also a key issue that CCICED Members and experts should study.

Third, a harmony between transforming the development mode and environmental protection through green development needs to be facilitated. The CCICED 2010 Issues Paper points out that there is a fierce competition between environmental protection efforts and short-term development objectives with heavy resources and environmental costs. Accelerating the transformation of the economic development mode is a broad and deep reform that needs a profound change of ideas, mode and route of development, turning the contradictory and competitive relationship between environmental protection and economic development into mutual promotion and a win-win situation. Promoting green development is an important instrument for both environmental protection and economic development. It will not only save energy and reduce emissions, but also use resources more effectively, expand market demand and provide new job opportunities. We will facilitate green development more actively; give full play to the role of environmental protection in ensuring, promoting and optimizing the shift of the economic development mode; translate the “target driven mechanism” of environmental protection into economic restructuring and transformation; and better facilitate China’s economic and social development marked by high productivity, affluent livelihoods, and sound ecology.

Fourth, we must strengthen ecological management and rehabilitate important ecosystems.

President Hu Jintao called for ecological rehabilitation to rivers and lakes when he visited the Huaihe River. He summarized what past rulers did in history and urged ecological development and humanistic care of all rivers and lakes. This has become China’s new guiding policy for controlling water environment and pollution. Rehabilitating important



ecosystems and ecosystem management - the focus of CCICED research this year - are the same in nature, which gives the direction for further research. China Ecological Footprint Report presented by CCICED this year points out that per capita ecological footprint in China is twice its environmental carrying capacity with an increasing ecological deficit. Although relevant data may need further discussion, the conclusion of the report raises an alarm. We must regard ecosystems “from mountains to seas” as a closely related and inseparable whole. Based on environmental carrying capacity and ecological carrying capacity, we will adhere to the principle of prioritizing protection and natural restoration; give full play to self resilience of ecosystems; comprehensively employ engineering, technical, ecological and systematic methods; make greater efforts in conservation of biodiversity; address historical environmental problems at the root and improve the eco-service functions of natural environment.

Fifth, we must continue to explore the new path to environmental protection with Chinese characteristics from a new starting point.

Two consensuses have been reached on environmental protection. First, environmental issue is a global problem. Second, environmental problems do not have national boundaries. China is the largest developing country. The development and implementation of large-scale environmental governance plans are not merely domestic affairs, they are also open to international communities, to learn from the advanced environmental ideas and mature environmental technologies of other countries. China’s achievement in environmental governance will be its contribution to the world. At this AGM, quite a few experts and scholars expressed their insights, in line with the theme, on exploration of the new path to environmental protection in terms of promoting green development, developing ecological civilization and improving service functions of ecosystems. I have learned a lot. In fact, exploration of the new path to environmental protection that is low in cost, high in benefits, low in emissions and sustainable in development has rich meanings and requirements. Any new ideas, measures and suggestions conducive to environmental protection contribute to and actively promote the new path for environmental protection. In this sense, CCICED experts and Members are the explorers and promoters of the new path for environmental protection.

Members and experts,

Next year CCICED will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Looking back, we can see that profound changes have taken place in China’s environment and development situation over the past 20 years. The work style and mechanism of CCICED have experienced some adjustments. However, what has not changed is the irreplaceable advisory role of CCICED



in helping the Chinese Government to promote coordinated development of economy and environment. Many policy recommendations put forward by Members and experts have been implemented and many dreams have become reality. This reminds me of the words of Great German Poet Johann Wolfgang Goethe: “all theory is grey, and green the golden tree of life.”. The key reasons for the vigor and vitality of CCICED lie in the fact that it is deeply rooted in China’s environmental protection practice, identifying its research themes and countermeasures based on the changes of each year, thus making the findings more timely and relevant. Therefore, CCICED has always remained active and attracted public attention. Each AGM creates a good atmosphere for international environmental cooperation, bringing about better environmental awareness and stronger promotion of environmental protection in China. CCICED has become a brand with a great role. I hope that in next year’s 20th anniversary of CCICED, we will summarize the adoption of key policy recommendations every year. The celebration of the 20th anniversary of CCICED will be a simple but solemn event. A meeting between Premier Wen Jiabao and Members will be held, which will promote the activities of CCICED to a new stage.

At the end of this meeting, on behalf of the CCICED Bureau and Ministry of Environmental Protection, I extend my sincere thanks to experts, scholars, government officials at home and abroad as well as working staff, who have worked hard for the success of this AGM! I wish you all a pleasant stay and good health!